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*Comments by Staff
attached -*

26 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: Secretary Rusk's Memorandum on Atmospheric
Nuclear Testing**

Secretary Rusk's memorandum has been carefully reviewed by appropriate specialists in O/NE. They are in substantial agreement with the intelligence judgments contained in it and have found nothing with which we would wish to take major exception from the estimative viewpoint.

However, we would note that an announced US decision to resume atmospheric nuclear testing, coming just before resumption of disarmament talks, might have a somewhat sharper adverse effect on world opinion than the memorandum implies. This might be mitigated either by announcing that we felt compelled to undertake new tests after a stated date unless the USSR gave convincing indications of its willingness to negotiate a properly safeguarded test ban promptly and to

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abide by a test moratorium in the meantime. Or we might announce our willingness to cease testing even before the projected test series was complete should the USSR give such indications. We recognize, of course, that there might be other considerations which would make such a suggested course of action impractical.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO :

FROM :

DATE: 23 February 1962

CONFIDENTIAL**SUBJECT:** Comment on Secretary Rusk's Memorandum on Nuclear Testing

1. We anticipate no great problem consequent on the resumption of atmospheric tests as far as our allies in the Middle East and South Asia are concerned, e.g. Iran and Pakistan. We are not convinced, however, that in the neutralist countries, e.g. the UAR and India, we can do much to minimize propaganda and psychological losses, as is stated in the second paragraph of Page 3 of the memorandum.

2. By prior consultation and careful explanation, we may be able to ameliorate the adverse effect on certain governments -- though by such action we also would be taking the risk of inspiring desperate last-minute appeals to the President from such people as Nehru and Sukarno designed to forestall a resumption. As far as the general public in the area is concerned, reaction will be based on established preconceptions, fear of fall-out probably being the most acute. We have contributed somewhat to this fear ourselves by our emphasis on the fall-out danger inherent in the recent Soviet test series. We doubt that anything much can be done to mollify this fear now, although we agree with the Secretary that it will probably be manageable in proportion.

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3. In regard to measures designed to bolster our decision to resume atmospheric testing which are discussed on Page 5, it might be worth considering including in our announcement an offer to cease atmospheric testing, even in mid-course, if the USSR will join in another moratorium and undertake negotiations for an inspection system. The reference in the second paragraph of Page 1 of the memorandum, to a freeze in testing being to the US advantage suggests such action might be consistent with our basic security requirements.

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23 February 1962

SUBJECT: WE Comments on Rusk Memo

We do not anticipate serious repercussions in the West when a US decision to resume atmospheric nuclear testing is announced. There is general -- if reluctant -- agreement that such a step would be justified if military necessity could be demonstrated. This view is held even by the leader of the British Labor Party. The Scandinavians are likely to be most glum about the resumption of tests. However, public opinion in these countries may tend to be preoccupied with the damaging cumulative effects on the atmosphere of Soviet plus US tests, rather than the necessity for the West to keep pace with Soviet weapon technology. Canada will also evidence some dismay at the decision, but on balance will almost certainly support the US policy. We do not believe the new Italian government will be seriously embarrassed by a US decision to resume testing -- although it is not unlikely that Fanfani will come forward at this point and publicly challenge his new supporters in the PSI by positively endorsing such a decision.

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